

# Eternal, Conscious Torment, in HELL? Really?

What happens to the unsaved? The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 6:23:

- "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

There is nothing in that verse about eternal life in some sort of fiery "hell." Unless you receive the gift of eternal life you will perish in what is called the "second death," after judgment. After that second death, there is no more hope of life or resurrection. You perish. You're destroyed. You don't exist any more. It's the end of you. Here are a few Bible verses about this:

- "For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be" (Psalms 37:10).
- "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever" (Psalms 92:7).
- "The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity" (Proverbs 10:29).
- "As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation" (Proverbs 10:25).
- "Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he?" (Job 20:4–7)
- "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch . . . And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 4:1,3)

John 3:16 says the same: we either receive the gift of eternal life, or we perish:

- "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

So where does the fiery eternal "hell" idea come from? The word "hell" in the KJV New Testament was used 23 times, in place of three different Greek words. Those three words have different meanings . . . and none of those three refers to a place of fiery, perpetual torment. The three Greek words are:

— ᾅδης

("hades" in English); appears as "hell" ten times and as "grave" once in the KJV New Testament; refers to the place of the dead, the grave, similar to the Hebrew word "she'ol" in the Old Testament

— γέεννα

("geenna" or "gehenna" in English); Appears as "hell" 12 times in the KJV New Testament; refers to a valley used as a dump outside Jerusalem in Jesus' time. Constant fire and maggots there permanently destroyed whatever was thrown in.

— ταρταρωσας

a verb, an inflection or variant of ταρταρώω; ("tartaroo" in English); used only once: to describe fallen angels being put into a figurative pit or prison, to be held in restraint.

You don't have to take my word for any of this. You can look these up with online Bible study tools such as [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org).

Translators (especially King James Version, 1611) made a real mess when they used the word "hell" in place of these three Greek words. They were twisting the meanings of the Greek words to conform to their concept of a place of perpetual, fiery torment. They had inherited that hell concept, by tradition, from the Catholic church.

Over time translators have recognized this error and footnoted their versions, noting the original Greek words, or even using the original Greek words—and not using the word "hell." *Young's Literal Translation* (YLT) leaves the word "hell" out entirely.

Here's an example of Jesus speaking of "hell fire":

- "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:" (Mark 9:47)

"Hell" in that verse is from that Greek word γέεννη or "gehenna," a reference to that dump outside Jerusalem. The trash and garbage was thrown there to be destroyed by the constant fire - "hell fire" - and worms - maggots - in the dump. Jesus *likened* the destruction of the wicked to being cast into the dump for permanent, final destruction. They would be figuratively thrown into the dump for destruction.

The "lake of fire" in Revelation pictures the same, final destruction:

- "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

Here's another verse where "hell" is from the Greek word γέεννη or "gehenna":

- "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

So, when Jesus said the soul can be destroyed in hell, what did He mean? First, "destroy" is from the Greek word ἀπόλλυμι ("apollymi") which means "to destroy fully" (from *Strong's Definitions*). And "hell" in that verse is from the Greek word γέεννα ("geenna" or "gehenna") which was the dump outside Jerusalem, where fire and maggots destroyed all the trash and bodies that were thrown in. Jesus likened the fate of the unsaved to being "thrown into the dump," into "hell [gehenna] fire" for destruction.

In Matthew 25:46 Jesus describes the fate of the unsaved:

- "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

When a criminal is executed, the punishment is not "everlasting" in the sense of being ongoing, perpetual punishing. No, the punishment is "everlasting" in the sense that it is permanent, complete and final and irrevocable. It will be the same for the unsaved; they will be destroyed and that will be the end of them. Their punishment is finished and stands forever; it is not perpetual, ongoing punishing.

The words "permanent" and "final" never appear in the KJV; "everlasting" is often used instead. It's a mistake to assume "everlasting" means an ongoing, perpetual process. It can refer to a permanent, finished and irreversible condition.

The "lake of fire" in Revelation is like the gehenna "dump" fire. It pictures final, irrevocable destruction. Those persons who are "cast into the lake of fire" are destroyed. They are destroyed, through death; specifically the second death, after judgment. They have no further hope of life or resurrection. They will never "be" again:

- "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

Even death and the grave (hades) will be destroyed—figuratively "cast in the lake of fire":

- "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:14,15).

After the final judgment and the destruction of the wicked, death is effectively destroyed—because everyone left will have received eternal life. And the grave (ᾅδης or "hades") is destroyed, because no one will be left in the grave awaiting resurrection for judgment. Paul wrote:

- "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26).

Death will be destroyed—after the wicked have been destroyed through death and the rest have received eternal life.

So, what's the "weeping" and "wailing" and "gnashing of teeth" Jesus spoke of? It's from the mental anguish the wicked will have when they see others receiving eternal life and then realize they, too, could have received eternal life were it not for their own foolish choices.

Perhaps you're wondering when the wicked are burned up and reduced to ashes as we read earlier. This will literally happen to some of the wicked. After the 1000 years of Jesus' rule here on earth, Satan will be released for one final time of judgment on mortal men. Satan will lead many in a rebellion against Jesus, apparently surrounding Jerusalem with the intent of overthrowing the Kingdom of God here on earth. Revelation 20:7–9 describes this:

- "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (Revelation 20:7–9).

Even Satan will be reduced to ashes, destroyed, never to be any more. Ezekiel 28:13–19 describes Satan and his fate:

- "Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the

carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more" (Ezekiel 28:13–19)

Now, maybe you're thinking, "Don't we have immortal souls, that have to "be" or exist somewhere, forever?" Well no, we don't; if we had immortal souls, there would be no need for us to receive the gift of eternal life. And the first couple were put out of the garden so they could not eat from the tree of life and then live forever. They did not possess any sort of immortality.

"Soul" in the Bible refers to the self, your being, your person. That can be ended, destroyed, as we saw earlier in Matthew 10:28. The prophet Ezekiel wrote:

- "The soul [the person] that sinneth, it shall die . . ." (Ezekiel 18:20)

That's like Paul's statement:

- "For the wages of sin is death . . ." (Romans 6:23)

Over the centuries the pagan concept of an immortal soul, that floats up out of your body when you die, has crept into traditional Christianity. Here's the pagan philosopher Plato, hundreds of years before Christ:

*"Do we believe that there is such a thing as death? And is this anything but the separation of soul and body? And being dead is the attainment of this separation; when the soul exists in herself, and is parted from the body and the body is parted from the soul . . . beyond question the soul is immortal and imperishable, and our souls will truly exist in another world!"* (Plato, in *Phaedo*, about 360 BC)

Salvation is not about - and never was about - **where** you'll "spend" eternity. You won't even **have** an eternity - of any sort, anywhere - unless you receive the gift of eternal life. We either perish, or we receive the gift of eternal life:

- "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Eternal, conscious torment is a fiery hell is not "justice," as some preachers would have you believe. No: it's both ridiculous and un-Biblical. Those who teach that God will mercilessly (and pointlessly) torment the wicked forever are doing major damage to Christianity. Actually, they're doing Satan's work, portraying God as a sadistic monster and making Christianity look foolish.

I have other videos on my YouTube channel which go into hell and the soul in more detail,

including many more scriptures. I hope you check them out.